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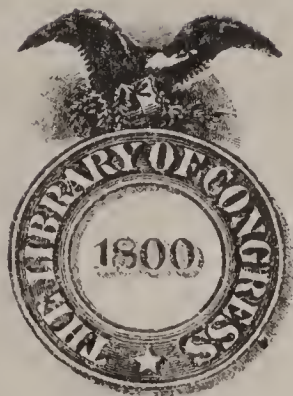
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THEY HUNTED HIGH AND LOW



GRACE AND OCTIE BARNETT



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THEY HUNTED HIGH AND LOW



BY
GRACE AND OLIVE BARNETT

illustrated by the authors

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“Scat!” cried Grandma’ Robidoe.

“Lucy, do call this cat. How can I knit with him in my yarn?”



“Here Kitty, Kitty, Kitty,” called Lucy. She set down a saucer of milk. Then she went to help Grandpa Robidoe pull weeds in the garden.

Jonah lapped the saucer clean. But in three minutes he was tangled in Grandma’s yarn again.



“Scat!” cried Grandma Robidoe. She picked up the hearth broom.

Jonah didn’t like the broom, so he untangled himself and jumped through the open window.

Grandma began to knit, but her needles had not clicked twice when she heard a voice outside.

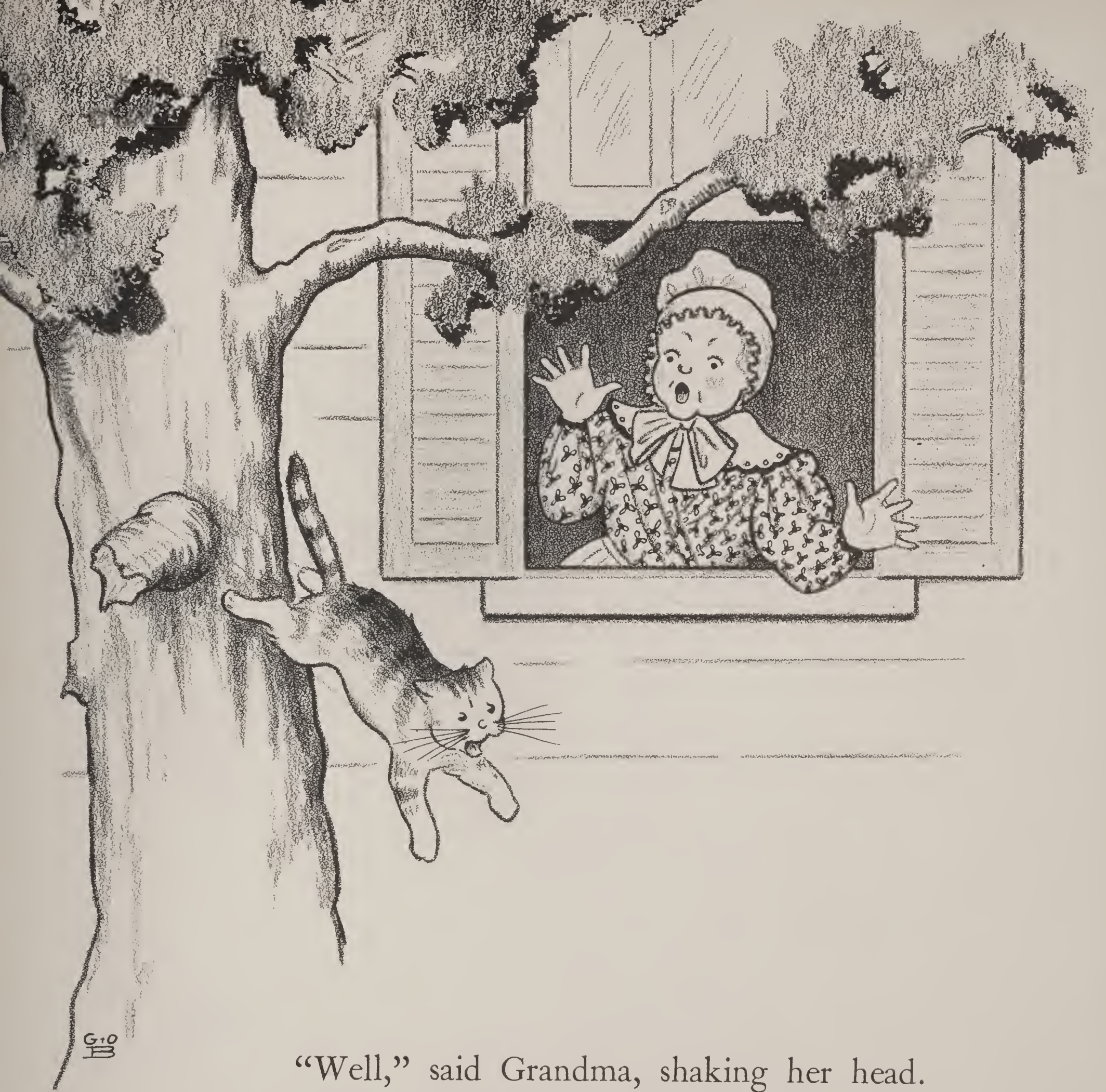
“Kitty, Kitty, Kitty,” called the voice.

“Oh, the goose’s foot!” said Grandma. “Why doesn’t Lucy leave that cat where he is?”

“Kitty, Kitty, Kitty,” called the voice again. Then there was a loud “SCAT.”

Grandma looked out of the window in time to see Jonah leap wildly from a branch of the oak tree and disappear under the shed.

In the far end of the garden Lucy and Grandpa were pulling weeds. Nothing else moved except a big, black crow, flapping his way toward the woods.



“Well,” said Grandma, shaking her head.
“Well, I declare.”

She called Grandpa.

They looked in the oak tree. Lucy looked around the house. But no one was there.



Lucy was still wondering about it next morning as she and Jonah watched Grandpa draw a pail of water from the well.

“How this windlass squeaks!” said Grandpa. “Lucy, get the can of grease from the shed.

“That’s better,” said Grandpa a few minutes later. The squeak was quite gone.





Lucy and Grandpa and Jonah went to breakfast. Grandpa was pouring cream on his porridge when there came a loud squeaking from the yard.

“Bless my whiskers!” said Grandpa. “That sounds like the windlass. Who in tunket can be drawing water?”

Grandma and Grandpa and Lucy and Jonah ran to the door. The squeaking stopped. No one was in sight. The only thing that moved was a big, black crow, flapping his way toward the village green.

“Well, I snum!” said Grandpa, pulling his whiskers.

Grandma looked at Jonah as though HE might be to blame.

Lucy ran down the village street to find Johnny Felton.



Johnny sat on the edge of the watering trough. With his bare toes he was picking up pebbles, dropping them one by one into the water.

“Johnny,” cried Lucy breathlessly, “the village is haunted.”

“Haunted,” cried Johnny. “What do you mean?”

“There are squeaks and voices with nobody to make ’em,” said Lucy. She told Johnny about the cat and the windlass.

“Jee-miny codfish!” said Johnny, “it must be a sure enough spook.”

“Whoa!” said a loud voice.

Lucy and Johnny jumped as Elder Humphries’ horse buried his nose in the water beside them.

“What are you young ones up to now?” asked the elder.

He listened to their story. Then he laughed.

“Spooks? Haunts?” he cried. “Nonsense! No one believes in them any more. Jump in and ride to the lighthouse with me.”

Lucy and Johnny loved to visit the lighthouse. They climbed in without waiting to be asked again.



“Giddap, Lucifer,” said the elder.

Lucifer ambled down the street. They had barely started when a loud voice cried, “Whoa!”

Lucifer stopped.

“Who did that?” said the elder. He looked around. No one was in sight.

“Perhaps it’s the haunt,” suggested Johnny.

“Nonsense!” said the elder. “Giddap, Lucifer.”

Lucifer started again. He had not gone two rods when the same voice called “Whoa!”

Lucifer stopped.

The elder almost jumped from his seat. Johnny and Lucy jumped. They all looked about.

“Who IS that?” cried the elder.

“Perhaps it’s the spook,” said Lucy breathlessly.

“Nonsense,” answered the elder. “It’s only some bad boy. And I’m going to find him.”

The elder and Johnny and Lucy climbed out of the chaise. Lucifer started to munch grass by the roadside.





The elder looked first in the shoemaker's shop.

But the shoemaker knew of no bad boy.

"It's a spook," said Lucy in a whisper.

"Spook," cried the shoemaker. "Tacks and beeswax!
Do tell."

The elder growled scornfully.

With a shoe in one hand and a hammer in the other,
the shoemaker followed him into the street.



They went to the baker's. But the baker knew of no mischievous boy.

"It might be a spook," whispered Johnny.

"By ginger!" cried the baker. Covered with flour as he was, he followed them into the street.

The elder humphed scornfully.

He marched into the village store followed by Johnny, Lucy, the shoemaker and the baker. But there was no boy to be found.

“Perhaps the village really is haunted,” said the shoemaker in a loud whisper.

“Oh my land alive,” cried timid little Mrs. Tucker who was buying calico for a dress. “Do you really think so?” She jumped so that she dropped the bag of feathers she had brought to trade for molasses. Feathers flew everywhere.

They stuck in the merchant’s hair. They flew up the shoemaker’s nose. They stuck to the dough on the baker’s hands.

The merchant sneezed. Lucy sneezed until her braids bobbed.

But the elder sneezed hardest of all.



“Atchooooo! Atchooooo! Atchooooo!” he sneezed.
“All this comes of nonsense about haunts and spooks.”



Out into the street he went, followed by Johnny, Lucy, the shoemaker, the baker, Mrs. Tucker and the merchant. The merchant still hugged his bolt of calico.

They had just reached the sidewalk when a voice, very like the elder's, called "GIDDAP."

Lucifer lifted his head in surprise. But he began to trot down the street.



“Whoa!” cried the elder.

“Giddap!” cried the voice.

“Whoa!” called the elder waving his arms.

He ran after the carriage. So did Johnny and Lucy and the shoemaker. So did the baker and Mrs. Tucker and the merchant.

Lucifer was disturbed by the noise. He ran, and ran.

The elder yelled till his face was red, and the villagers poured into the street to see what the commotion was about.



Farmer Peabody arrived in the midst of this hubbub.
He carried a splendid duck under one arm.



“Johnny, watch my duck. We’ll find that boy,” said he.

“Suppose it IS a spook,” said someone. “How can we catch a spook?”

“Nonsense,” said Farmer Peabody. “There are no spooks.”

Elder Humphries was too angry to say anything. But he followed Farmer Peabody and the villagers as they trooped down the street.



Johnny and Lucy and the duck sat on the steps of the store.

“Quack, quack,” said the duck.

“You’re squeezing him too tight,” said Lucy.

“Well, why do we have to mind him, anyway,” grumbled Johnny.

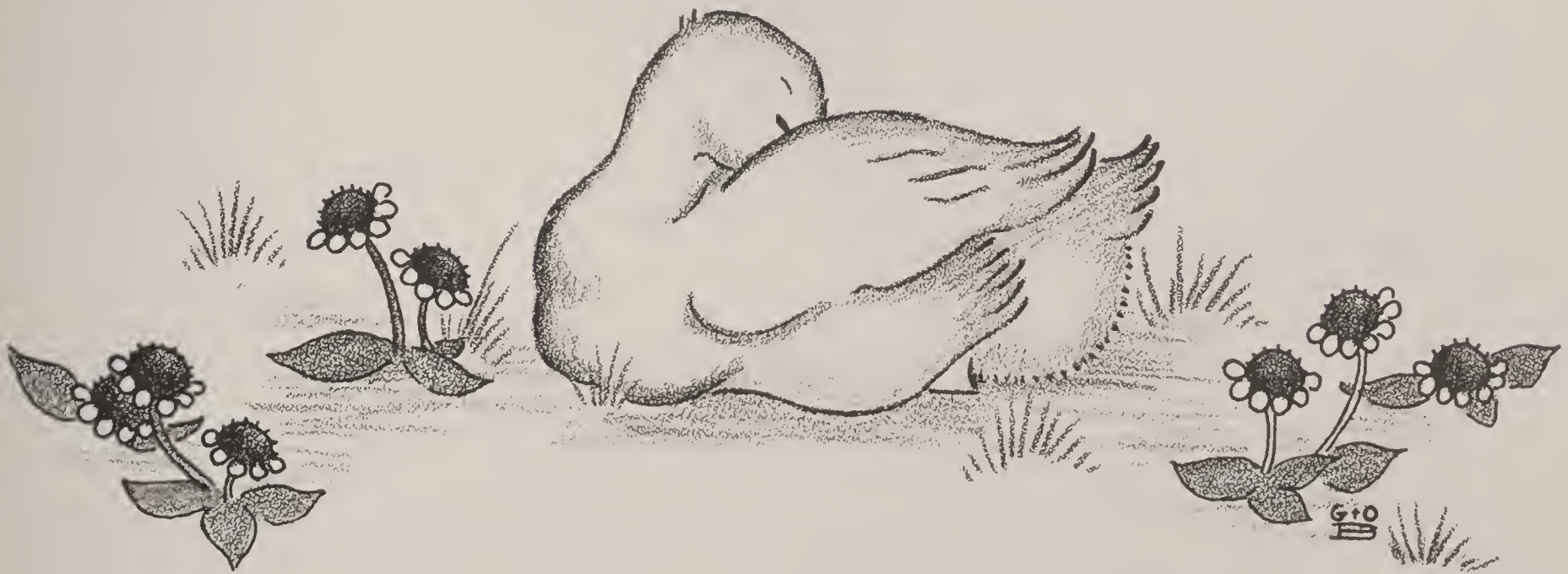
“Quack, quack,” said the duck.

“Sit there, then,” said Johnny, putting the duck beside the step.

The duck put his head under his wing and went to sleep.

“He’ll be all right,” said Johnny. “Let’s hunt in the meeting-house steeple. It’ll only take a minute.”

Away they ran. But they were gone more than a minute.



When they came back, Farmer Peabody and the villagers were already at the store without a trace of a bad boy.

“Where’s my duck?” cried Farmer Peabody.

“Right there,” said Johnny, pointing.

But the spot beside the steps was empty

“Oh my beautiful duck,” wailed Farmer Peabody. “I raised him to take to the fair. I MUST find my duck.”

“Listen,” said Johnny. “I hear him down the lane.”

Sure enough, there came a plain “quack, quack” from the lane.

Farmer Peabody ran to look under the hedge. Johnny crawled through the hedge into the field. Lucy ran up and down the lane looking under every bush. But no duck was to be found.

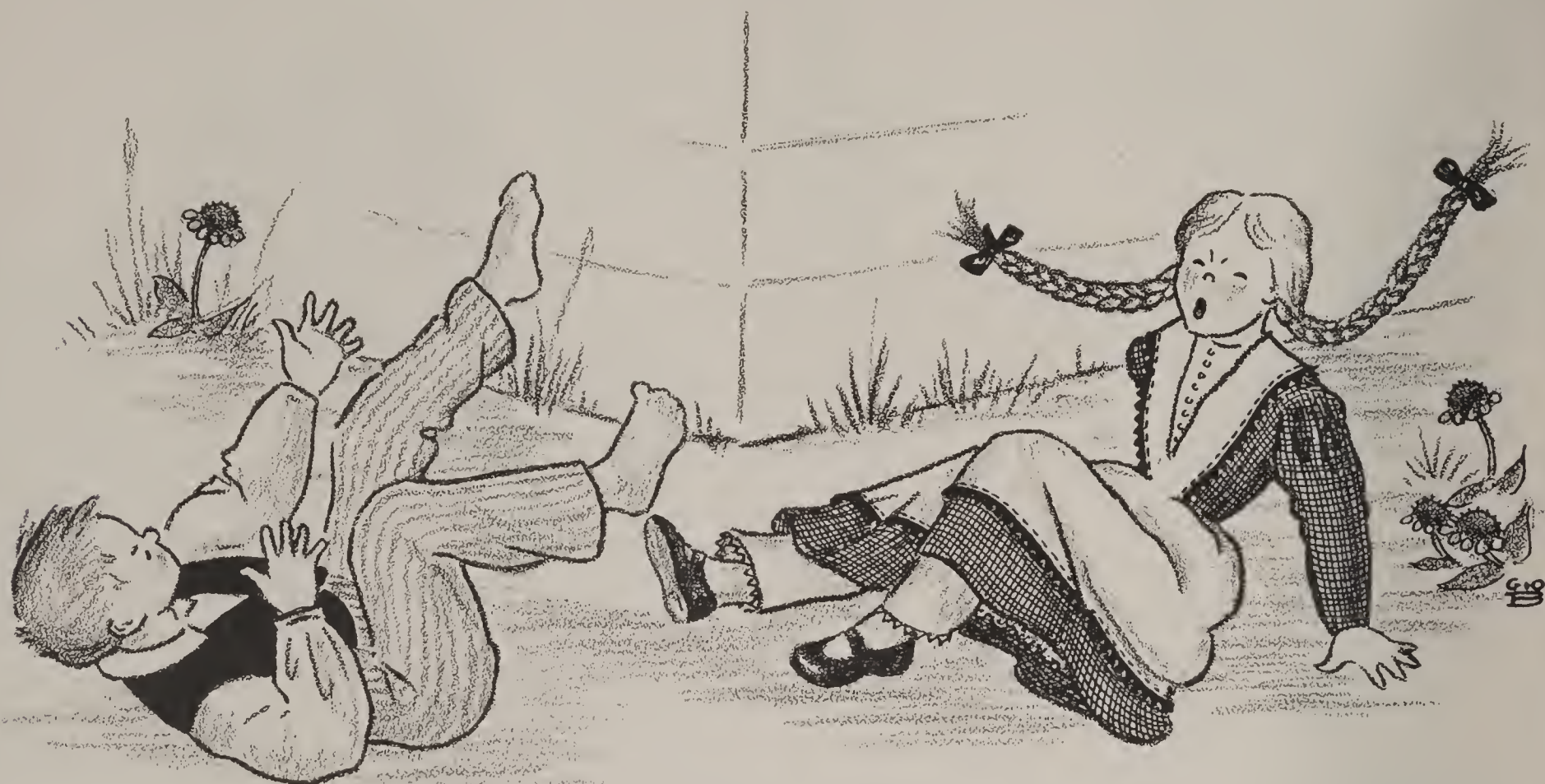
They mopped their faces while they stopped to catch a breath.

“I hear him now by the meeting-house,” cried Johnny.

Sure enough, came “quack, quack,” from the meeting-house yard.



Johnny was the first to run that way. Lucy was close at his heels. The villagers came trailing after.



Johnny ran around the meeting-house one way. Lucy ran the other way. At the northeast corner they met with a bang.

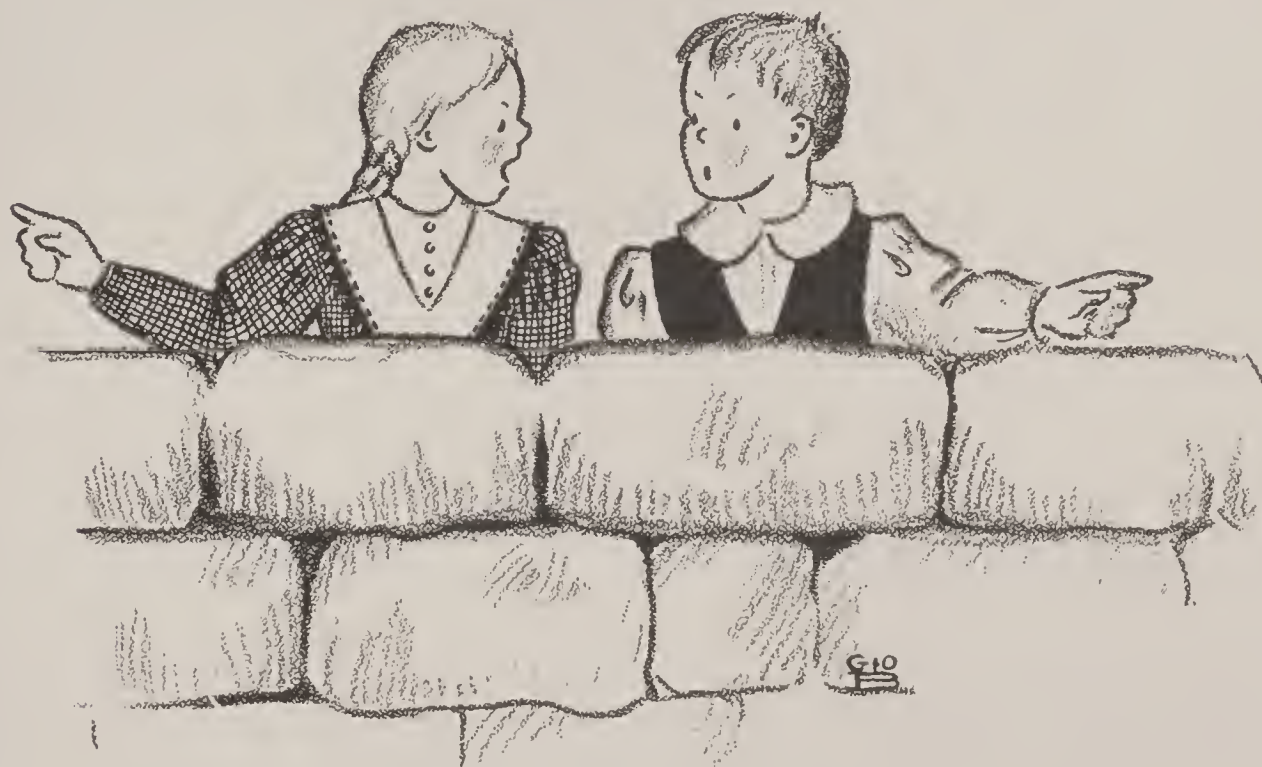
Johnny sat down. Lucy sat down. Neither had breath enough to beg the other's pardon. They sat and looked at each other till they heard a loud "quack, quack" from the bayberry bushes by the stone wall.

Scrambling to their feet, they hurried toward the sound. Under every bush they peered. They even climbed the stone wall to look on the other side.

“Quack, quack.” This time the sound came from the lilac bushes behind the meeting-house.

But on the north side or on the south side, under or around the lilac bushes, no duck was to be seen.

The only feathered creature in sight was a big, black crow flapping his way toward the woods.



Tired out at last, Farmer Peabody went back to the store steps. Johnny and Lucy went with him. The villagers trooped after them.

“My poor, beautiful duck,” mourned Farmer Peabody.

“Quack, quack, quack, quack.”

Farmer Peabody looked up. There in the store doorway, stood Jeramiah, the grocer’s boy. He had a foolish grin on his face. Under his arm he held Farmer Peabody’s duck.

“You’d better take your duck before he bursts,” said Jeramiah. “He’s been eatin’ corn ever since Johnny left him. Finished nigh onto a bushel, seems like.”



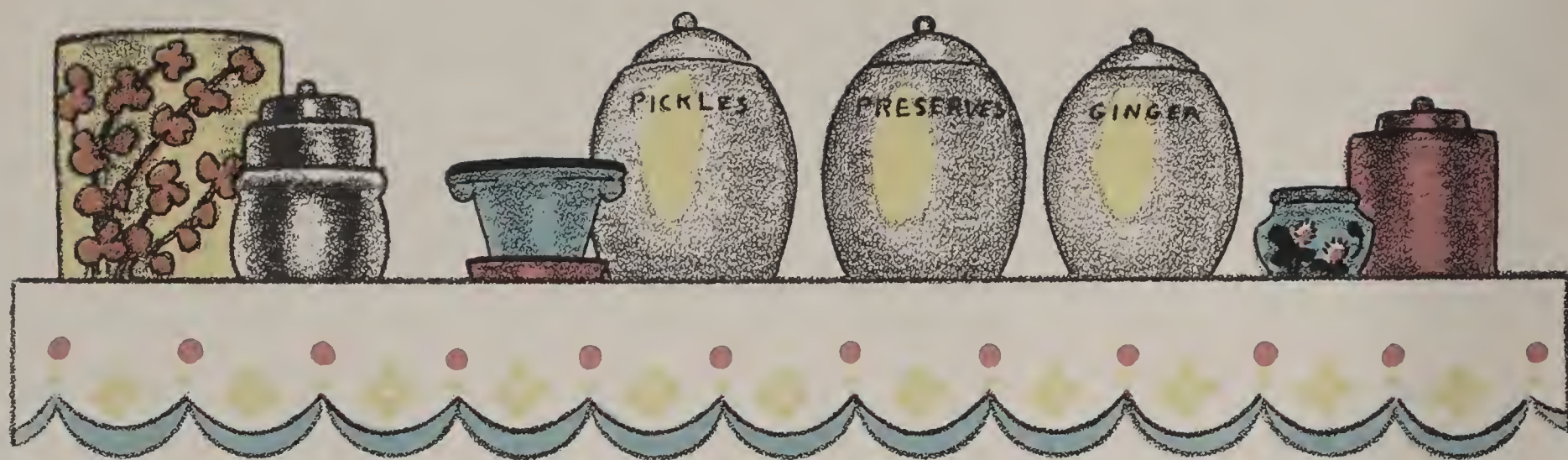
Farmer Peabody grabbed his duck. He pinched it to make sure it was real.

“Quack, quack,” objected the duck.

“He’s been in the store all this time?” gasped Farmer Peabody.

“Sure has,” answered Jeramiah. “Feel of his crop.”

“Then what we heard was a SPOOK,” said Johnny in a loud whisper.



“The animals in this village are bewitched,” cried timid Mrs. Tucker.

“Nonsense!” said Elder Humphries. But he didn’t say it quite so loudly as before.

“Spooks or no spooks,” said Grandma Robidoe, “I have to bake my pies for the picnic.”

“The picnic!” cried the villagers. “Even spooks shan’t stop our picnic.”

Away hurried the women to make cakes and pies, to season jars of beans and to bring up pickles and preserves.

Farmer Peabody took his duck home. Elder Humphries went in search of his horse.

But the villagers were uneasy. They looked quickly behind doors. They started at every sound.

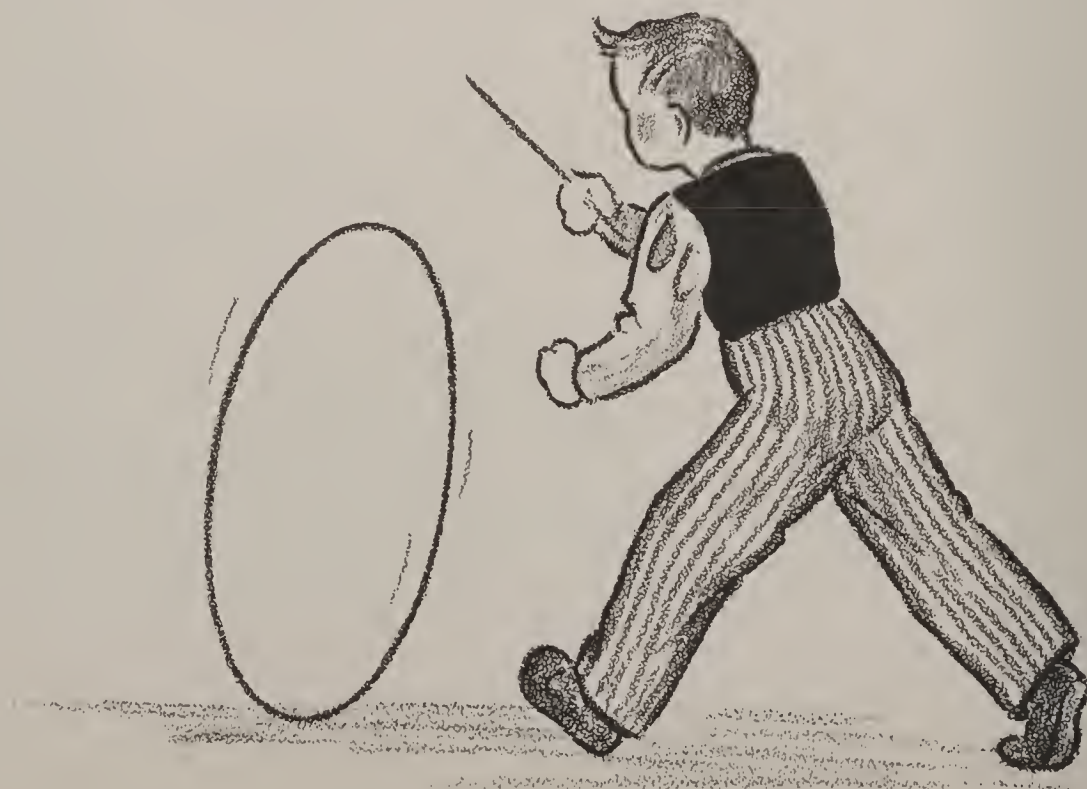
Grandma Robidoe stepped on Jonah's tail. She almost dropped a pie when Jonah protested with a loud MEOWWWWW.





Everyone was still fidgety at picnic time in the meadow by the woods.

The babies were cross. They cried while the children rolled hoops and played games.





They cried while their mothers held them. They cried when their mothers laid them down.

But at last they were all asleep, tucked round about with blankets and pillows.





Then the villagers sat down to enjoy the food spread on the long tablecloth.

But they hadn't taken a mouthful, when they heard a plaintive "y-a-a-a-a-a-a."

"That's my Henry," sighed Mrs. Hubbard.

But little Henry was fast asleep. Mrs. Hubbard sat down again.

"Y-a-a-a-a-a-a." This time the cry came from the woods.



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“Someone is carrying off one of our babies,” cried Mrs. Hubbard.

Bean pots were upset. Pie tins were overturned as everyone ran toward the woods.

Run as they might, the cry was always ahead of them. Thorns tore lace and ruffles. Branches knocked off hats. Roots tripped flying feet.

Through the woods the villagers followed the cry until it led them back to the meadow. There, fast asleep, was each and every baby of the village.

No one dared to say what each one thought. They just looked at each other.

Grandma looked at the picnic table. In the middle of it sat Jonah, licking cake and cream from his whiskers.

“Scat!” cried Grandma Robidoe.

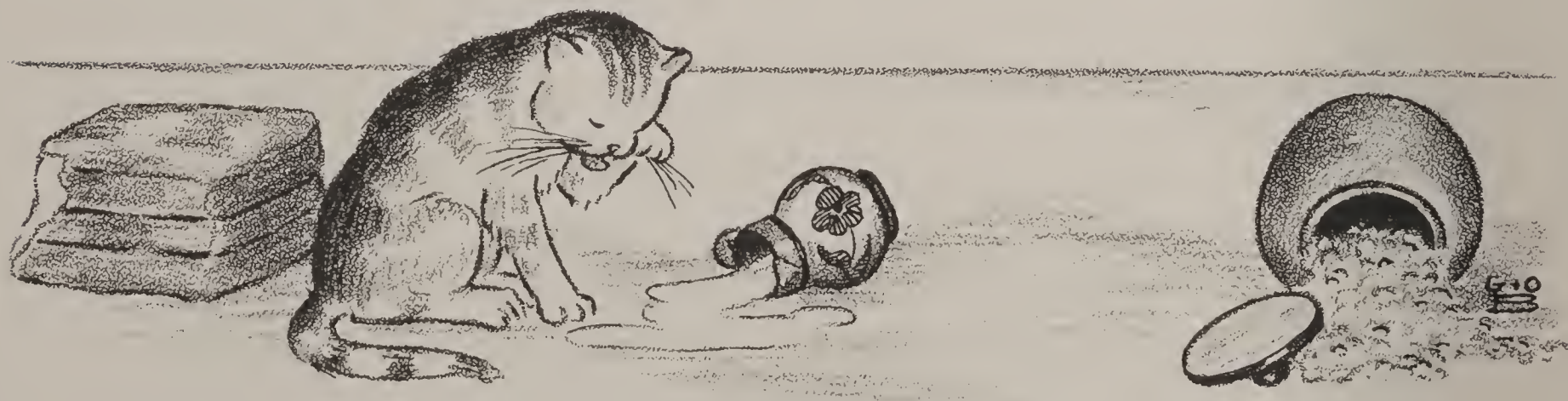
“Scat,” said a voice behind them.

Everyone whirled around. No one was there.

“THE SPOOK,” cried someone in a loud whisper.

“Scat,” said the same voice again. It came from the oak tree at the edge of the woods.

They all ran to peer up into the branches. There sat a big, black crow.

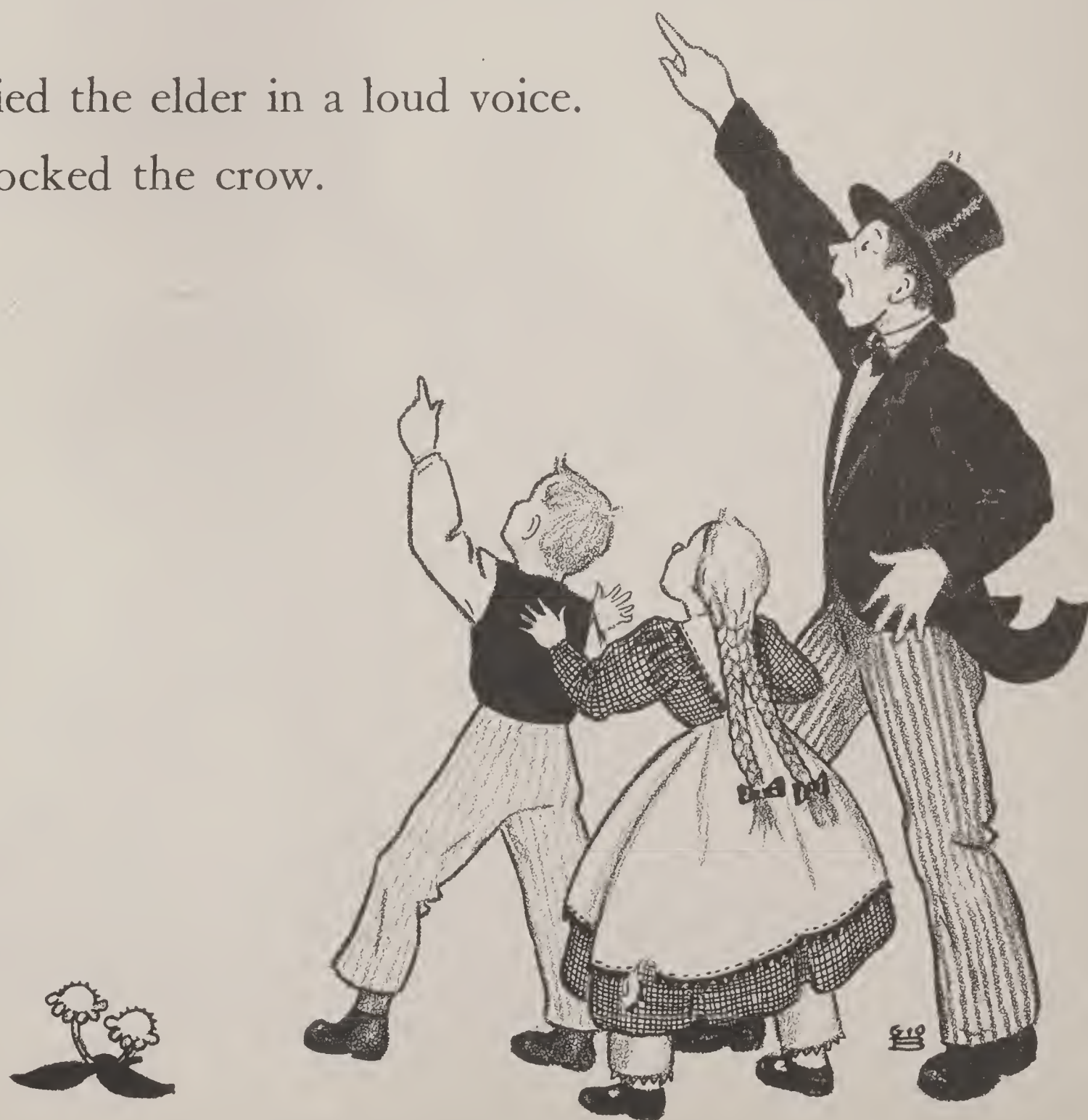




“There’s the mischief-maker,” cried Elder Humphries —“a crow that can talk or make whatever sounds he hears. I’ve heard of it, but never believed it. Listen and we shall see.

“Whoa,” cried the elder in a loud voice.

“Whoa,” mocked the crow.



The villagers shouted with surprise.

The babies woke up and began to cry. But no one minded a bit. The spook was found!

“Y-a-a-a-a-a-a,” cried the babies.

“Y-a-a-a-a-a-a,” mocked the crow as he flapped away over the woods.





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